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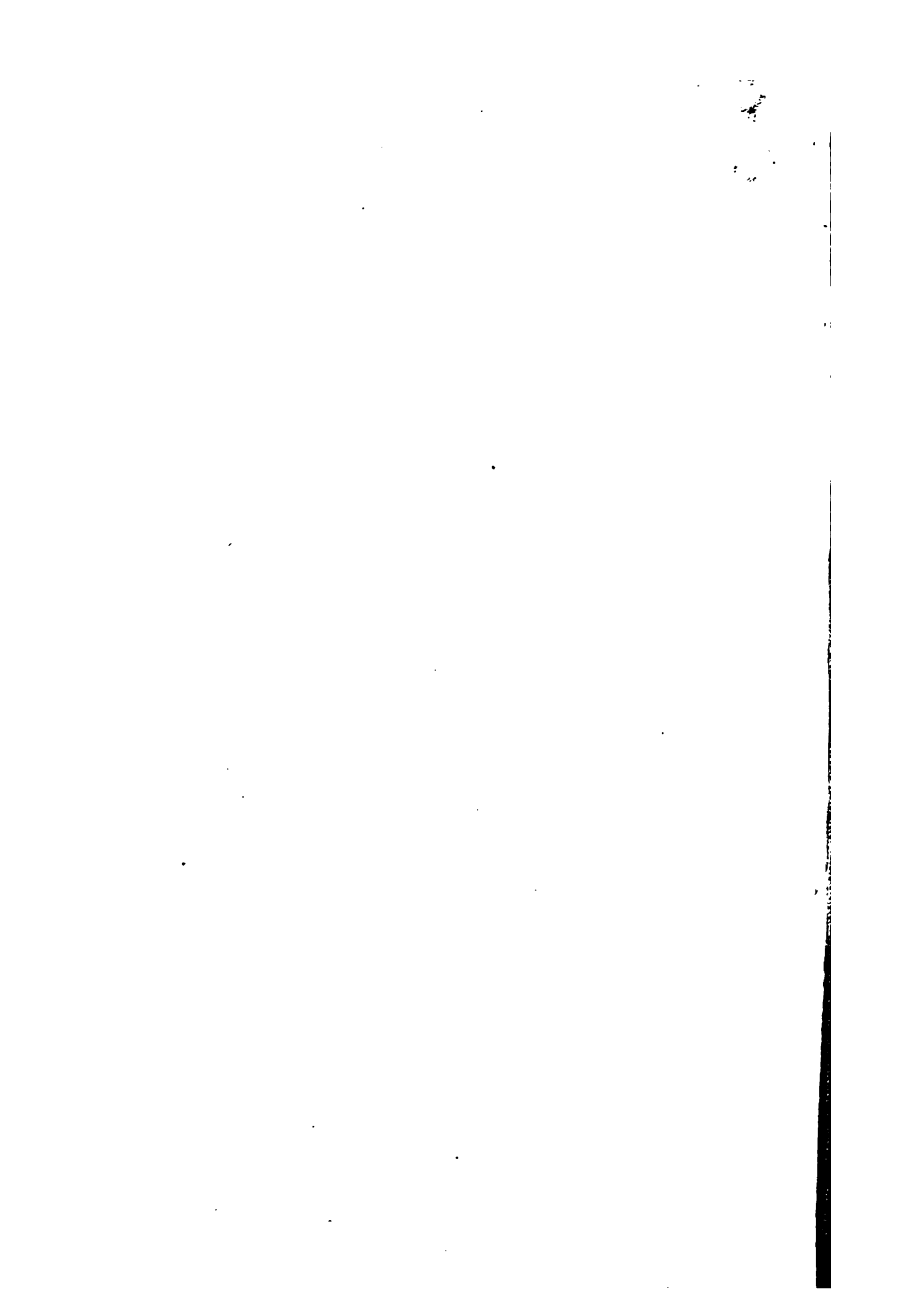
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CAMILLA AND GERTRUDE
AND OTHER POEMS
BY
FLORENCE H. HAYLLAR.









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LONDON:

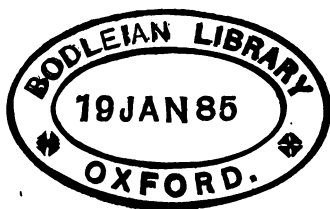
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To

The Right Honourable

The

Earl of Chichester

This

Little Book

of

Poems

Is, by Permission,

Most Respectfully Dedicated.



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POEMS AND LYRICS.

CAMILLA AND GERTRUDE.

In an old castle, which had faced the storms
Of full three hundred winters, and which now
Stood, with half-fallen towers, a preacher grey,
Telling of earth's decay and how all things
Must pass away, there lived, long years ago,
Two sisters, beautiful and sweet as fair.

Apart from all they grew, as gentle stars,
So far away that none may see how bright
The light they give ; pure and unstained were they ;
Nought knowing of the busy outer world
And all its gaiety and restless strife ;
Their world was closed within the walls of home.
Together roam'd they thro' the quiet woods,
By babbling brooks, o'er hills whose rugged brows
Tower'd, clothed in heather to the silent sky,
And on the vast sea-shore, where heavily
The white surf beat against the beach, and raised

The hollow moaning anthem of the deep.

Stern was their father, proud, unbending, harsh,
Looking with jealous, angry eye on all
The changeful progress of the age : retired,
In his old castle he brought up the two
In the old ways severe, and did his best
To make them shun the world so hateful to him.
So when his brow was darken'd and his voice
In answer to their gentle words was rough,
They (for in early girlhood they had been
Deprived of all a mother's tenderness
By Death) would seek some favourite spot and there,
Alone together talk of all their troubles,
Would weep together for a little while,
Then like an April day, would smile again,
Finding the sweetest comfort in the love
Each bore the other ; for as thus they grew,
With them shot up a deep and faithful love,
Which, twining round them soft invisible arms,
Drew their two hearts together ;—as young trees,
That in some forest, springing side by side
From the soft bosom of the mother-earth,
Join their green branches, till, when tall and high
They stand amidst the rest, unless by force
Asunder rent, no eye can well discern
To which each bough belongs—so these two clung
Each to the other.

Yet as bright twin stars,

Both beautiful, give each a different light,
So these two sisters, altho' each was fair,
Were different as Night is from the Day.
Camilla was the bright, the proud, the high
In thought and deed ; with one swift lightning glance
Of her dark fiery eyes she dazzled all
The senses, made the heart her own, and sway'd
The mind ; the very tones of her clear voice,
Speaking the passionate feelings of her soul,
Thrill'd all the listener's frame with sudden bursts
Of overwhelming gladness : royally
Majestic in most wondrous beauty, lit
With the sublime emotions of a heart
So lofty, yet so full of unknown depths
Of earthly love,—there was no heart so stern
But own'd her sway in melting tenderness.

But Gertrude was the deep, the sweet ; her mind
Was as a river flowing quietly
And mirroring the clouds, the trees, the flowers
And all it pass'd ; but down below, where none
Might see, the waters swell'd with heaving flow,
And struggled longingly to reach the sea.
Her soft blue eyes gave tender light and mild,
And often when alone and dreaming, fill'd
With happy tears ; she loved in solitude,
To ramble in the quiet of the woods,
And dream sweet dreams of love and constancy,
Of pure affection and self-sacrifice,

So dear to youth's first whiteness. With a love
Which almost reach'd to veneration, hung
Her heart upon her sister : as the boy
Adores some mighty hero, feeling all
His bosom thrill'd with awe and reverence,
Worshipping his ideal, so the sweet
And gentle girl, with humble, wondering mind
Adored her sister, her young life's ideal ;
Camilla's every glance and word, to her,
Seem'd great and godlike : and in beautiful
Unconsciousness of her own worth, she clung
The faster to her sister, as she felt
Herself to be the more unworthy her.
Well was her love repaid, for as the oak
Stoops its green branches, gently sheltering
The ivy which climbs lovingly about
Its breast, Camilla bent with truest love
To her sweet sister ; nor knew she that all
Her Gertrude's heart clung for support to her.
Camilla was the queenly rose which spreads
Her beauty smiling, to the golden sun ;
Gertrude, the violet hidden by her leaves,
And but by her sweet fragrance found and known.

It was a summer's evening ; 'neath the boughs
Of their old favourite oak, the sisters sat,
And watched the sun departing in the west,
Trailing his robe of crimson after him,
Bright with gold fringes. Long they gazed, nor spoke

Till Gertrude, in a low and dreamful voice,
Said : " See, another Day is dead, and soft
" Night wraps his corse in the dim, silent shroud
" Of Darkness ; with their tapers, one by one,
" The stars, his children, come in sadness bright,
" To follow in his funeral train ; and lo !
" His widow, with a veil about her face,—
" Lone, mournful Luna—comes ; before the great
" And lustrous loftiness of all her woe,
" The lesser mourners fade. On, on they go,
" To bury him, where his dead brethren lie
" In the dim, silent churchyard of the Past,
" Where Memory stands as guardian of their sleep."

" My little poetess," Camilla cried,
" A sweet thought truly ; truly it is so !
" Yet, Gertrude, few the graves of all those days
" Which Memory tends ; the most are quite forgotten.
" And, Gertrude, as the days forgotten are,
" In the great churchyard, so men go ; a few
" Sad tears are wept upon the once-loved brow,
" Wild sobs burst forth beside his open grave,
" Then all his friends return unto their homes ;
" Another fills the place the dead once filled,
" And never is his name heard more : Ah ! me !
" How many millions have been born, have lived
" And died, and nought we, their child's children, know
" Of all their deeds, words, feelings. It is sad
" To think we live a toilsome life—in vain !

"We are as glow-worms : while we live, we light

"But little, almost nought of the great Night

"Around us ; then for ever, it goes out,

"Our tiny spark, lost in the awful, strange,

"Illimitable Darkness ! Life is vain !"

She spoke in low, sad accents, and then ceased.

"Oh ! sister," soft said Gertrude, "why these words ?

"Art thou the same, who, only yesternight,

"Told me, triumphant, of the noble end

"Of man's existence ; of the place which each

"Was bound to fill ; how every one, tho' small,

"Made up the world's completeness, and how each

"Sweet deed of kindness, nay, each lofty thought,

"Help'd make this earth more fair was one step on

"Towards the Golden Age ! Now mournest thou

"That Life is vain ? Arise ! I cannot bear

"To see thy spirit, my Camilla, bow'd."

"Thanks, sister ! Thou hast roused me ! What !

I bent

"To melancholy dreamings such as fit

"But those whose spirits are too weak to bear

"This frosty air ! Life is a winter's day :

"The air is cold yet bracing ; strong men haste

"With glowing faces on their way, and feel

"Quick motion and stout heart can keep them warm ;

"But those poor, feebler ones, who shivering

"Bemoan their wretched lot and wail and wish

"To leave this icy world, are coward fools,

“ Weak hearts, scarce fit to live, in whom no sense
“ Of honour dwells, who never felt the rush
“ Of fervent true emotion kindle all
“ Their mind with thrilling and heart-warming joy !
“ We must be bold ! ‘ Forward ’ should be the word !
“ No looking backward on the past ! No glance
“ Of apprehensive fear, where, dim, the mist
“ Hangs o’er the fields we yet must traverse ! Nay,
“ We are made for somewhat nobler than to pine !
“ Onward the world is moving ! Each new year
“ Brings greater things than ever man has seen
“ Before, and opens to him wider fields
“ Where he may exercise his new-found powers !
“ Oh ! joy to live, to breathe ! Joy to possess
“ A living sou whose fiery thoughts may shine
“ And light tho’ but a little, this dim, grey
“ Twilight, presager of a glorious dawn !
“ A glorious dawn ! ’Twill come ! ’Twill come ! the day,
“ When all men shall be equal ; when the world
“ Will be perfection ! We are struggling now
“ Towards the goal ! Gertrude, Gertrude, I see
“ The march of ages ! Toiling hopefully
“ Towards the highest goal of Perfect Good,
“ I see all tribes of men ! How clear and plain
“ I see the long, long journey in the dark ;
“ The wanderers unconscious of themselves,
“ Pushing their way across the wilderness,
“ While o’er them, in the wild and stormy sky,

“ Now shining clear, now veil’d in inky clouds,
“ And visible but to a few, bright stars
“ Of hope smile sweetly ; and as on they press
“ Lighter the sky becomes, and ever rise
“ Fresh stars and give them light and joy. But soon
“ The pilgrims enter a wild mountain-pass,
“ Where rocky walls shut out the stars, and join
“ Above their heads dark overhanging cliffs.
“ And sighing painfully, with bleeding feet
“ And aching hearts they struggle on and grope
“ Thro’ that great tomb-like pass : and many fall,
“ Weary with toiling, and in deep despair,
“ Expire ; but most, urged on by some strange hope
“ Which they scarce understand, that promises
“ A happy end to all their misery,
“ Unheeding the dread whispers of Despair,
“ Hold on, tho’ faint and worn ; and as they go
“ The great cliffs part, and now at last they see
“ The stars again and full of faith rejoice.
“ And in the east there glimmer, grey and far,
“ Light streaks, the promise of a glorious dawn,
“ Cheering them greatly ; and with eager longing
“ To reach the goal, they journey on, and still
“ The light of dawn grows brighter in the east.
“ Here stand we now and wait to see the sun !
“ Oh ! Gertrude, for the full clear light of day,
“ Which ne’er shall set but last for evermore !”

She paused, her great eyes flashing, and the glow

Of inspiration giving all her face
A wondrous glory ; prophet-like she stood,
Her proud form raised to its full height ; one arm
Uplifted and her black hair floating wide
Upon the evening breeze which swept the land.
And Gertrude, watching her, was full of joy
And pride, and drew her sister to her breast
And cried : " Oh ! sister ! by thy glorious thoughts
" My soul is struck with joy ! Oh ! dearest one !
" Didst thou but know how, in these moments, quick
" My fond heart beats with happiness and pride
" And a warm gush of admiration thrills
" My being ! Sister, I am not like thee ;
" Nor do I wish to be so ; 'tis enough
" For me, to love thee and to know that thou
" Lovest me too ! But ah ! that words might tell
" The depth and the intense devotion of
" My love to thee ! But words are vain indeed !"
And with her eyes still radiant and bright
Camilla bent, and kissed the gentle brow
Smiling, and spoke : " My darling, thou to me
" Art dearer than thou knowest ; all my life
" Would be a sunless desert, if thy true
" Kind sympathy were not ! My love is more,
" More e'en than thine !" And in a whispering voice,
Half-sorrowful, did Gertrude make reply :
" I will not answer thee in boasting words,
" For where the heart feels most the lips are mute :

"But haply, Time with rolling years may prove
"Which loved the other with truest love."

'Twas early morning ; all the quiet hills
Were flooded by the ruddy-golden light
Of dawn ; the woods, which all night long had rock'd
And groan'd to the great gale, that, bringing clouds
Pregnant with lightning had swept over them
Now smiled with dripping foliage ; green and fair
The soft moss-carpet studded o'er with flowers
Lay round the tree-roots, lightly press'd at times
By foot of dappled fawn or rapid hare.
Gliding in spotless white, with golden hair
Down floating o'er her slender form and eyes
Sweet, starlike, wander'd Gertrude 'mid the grey,
Still ivy-cover'd ruins, wet from storms.
Then on an old grey lion, carved in stone,
Upon whose mighty head, with varied hue,
Grew lichens, kindly cov'ers of decay,
She sat her down : and musing, let the pure
White gold-fringed lily-petals droop above
The dewy violets, and in dreams, she saw
Strange faces, heard kind voices, and kind eyes
Smiled on her ; then they faded slow away,
And all the world seemed wrapt in misty gloom,
Making her whole heart sink with heaviness.
Then light came creeping thro' the dusk, and cleft
The mist ; till, touched with edges crimson-bright,
It slow roll'd back. And in the midst, his face

Bright-shining like a god's, there gazed at her
A youth with sunny locks and bright dark eyes.
Her spirit trembled, with a wild delight ;
She long'd to clasp his hand, and still half-fear'd
To look on him ; then the fair phantom spread
His shadowy arms, as if to draw her near
To him ; but 'twixt them came a floating shape,
(Camilla's queenly form, Camilla's face !)
Casting wild glances at him ; and in vain
He strove to reach her : with a sudden pang
She watch'd the mist then slowly cover all,
And waking, sighed to find it but a dream.

And when the Summer wailing bade farewell
To the brown Earth, and Autumn with his winds
Shook the sere leaves from off the shivering boughs,
There came two strangers to their father's hall :
A bluff old man who, in his younger days,
Had been the wildest student e'er the halls
Of Oxford knew, and who, in every broil,
Had found a true friend in the castle's lord.
But years had kept them long and far apart ;
For, loving not the dull monotony
Of his home life, and longing for the stir
Of war, the wild excitement and the joy
Which fire the soldier's heart on battle-fields,
The stranger thro' long stormy years had been
Fighting beneath our flag in Eastern lands ;
But the old friendship rose in fullest power,

When, coming bronz'd and scarr'd from distant wars
Chance threw his old companion in the way
Of the rough soldier, who, with hearty joy
Consented, for some little time, to cheer
The quiet castle with his full-voiced laugh ;
And coming brought with him his youthful son.
Proud was the old man of that only son ;
And well might be, for ne'er on British earth
Trode such a youth, so full of strength and fire,
So knightly courteous or so gently brave
As his own Randolph, his dear boy, the great
And only idol of his true old heart.

But when at their first meeting, low the youth
Bent before Gertrude, took her hand and spoke
Meet words of pleasure, o'er her soft fair face
There came a sudden paleness ; and her eyes
Dwelt long and earnestly on his which fixed
No less on her, till, with a sudden rush
Of timid bashfulness, which flooded o'er
Cheek, brow, and neck with crimson blushes, she,
Ashamed that she so long had dared to read
Those princely features, cast hers down, but felt
His glance rest on her yet : and strangely wild
Her little fluttering pulses went and came ;
And in her heart a small voice whisper'd low :
" 'Tis he, 'tis he who stretched his arms to me
From that red cloud : 'tis he of whom I dream'd."
And for a time the memory of that dream

Held Gertrude from him, made her soft cheeks flush
If e'er his dark eyes rested on her face,
And check'd her childish gladness, with the weight
Of a mysterious feeling undefined,
Yet ever present, dim, yet drawing all
The fancies of her brain unto itself,
And clothed in all the riches of her soul,
Throwing itself e'en on the seat of life
And ruling all her being with a sway
So gentle, that she lov'd to feel its power,
So pitiless and stern, she long'd to break
A thralldom which she could not understand :
But as the days passed on, the shyness pass'd,
She learn'd to trust her voice to speak to him,
To meet his eye nor shrink when he drew near ;
Yet ever that one feeling held her heart,
And all unknown to her merg'd slow the dream
And all her thoughtful musings on the strange
Fulfilment of the vision, in the deep
Still happiness of glad Reality.

And as the sisters wander'd with him, now
Where the dark pines in never-changing green
Mock'd at the mourning oak-trees whose gay robes
Were flying with the blustering autumn wind,
About the hill, now where with long deep roll
The sea-wave swept the beach, and ceaselessly
Beat on the white high cliffs and jagged rocks,
Young Randolph, finding them so innocent

Of all the guile that stains the busy world,
And seeing them desirous of the life
Beyond their little round of daily joys
And troubles, told them tales of court and camp,
Of mighty prowess in the wars ; of wrongs
Righted by fearless heart and steadfast hand ;
Of victories the mind of man hath won,
In the broad field of Science—painting not
The world as perfect, nor as wholly dark,
But, as he found it, often stain'd and full
Of sin and misery, but bearing still
Such germs of good as never could be lost—
Likening it to a vast wild tournament,
Wherein, with strength unequal two sides strive,
Yet Evil, which was stronger in the morn,
And scornfully his puny foe despised,
Towards the latter half of that red day
Grows weak and weary, yielding more and more
To the increasing force and dauntless arm
Of those whom he had mocked so bitterly,
The Good, who merciless, with noble zeal
And fiery ardour irresistible
Strike down the arrogant boasters wrathfully,
Then from the King of Kings, who watches, take
A crown of glory, theirs for evermore.
Of distant lands he told them too ; of life
Beneath the glowing heat of India's sky,
Or where the waters of the grand old Nile

Flow thro' a grateful country rich and fair ;
Of all the wild luxuriant beauty spread
About the hills and vales of Italy ;
Of Spain's dark people and their land ; then thro'
The sterner North he bade them wander, where
The hardy German peasant cheery toils,
Where France her laughing loveliness displays,
Or where the Dutchmen spend their still quaint lives,
Then smiling brought them to their hall again,
Dazzled and happy.

But when speaking thus,
Feeling that she best understood him, he
Turned to Camilla most, and most to her
Address'd his words ; and by his flashing eyes
And ardent speech enkindled, there arose
A true, deep love in her young heart ; a change
Pass'd over her—as when the wild fresh gales
That skim the sea are wholly hush'd, and soft
A murmuring breath steals o'er the ripples clear
And makes them thrill and quiver, so her mind,
Hush'd all the impulses which swayed it once,
With restless eager longings and desires,
Felt only, thrilling thro' its blissful calm
The breath of love ; the aimless thoughts and wild,
Which meteor-like had flash'd across her soul,
Now, calm'd and order'd, soften'd, purified,
Form'd a bright halo for that king-like head
Enshrined deep in the temple of her heart.

With conscious shame, she hid her love from him,
Veil'd her dark eyes lest they should show too much
Of what was burning, glowing in her soul—
Check'd the soft smile that play'd about her lips—
It might betray—Oh ! God—the very thought
Flush'd her white brow with hot and throbbing red.

Strangely unlike were those two maidens ; one,
So full of girl-like consciousness of love,
The other, like a rose amid her leaves
That quivers blissfully whene'er the sun
Bends on her downcast head an ardent eye,
Nor knows why happiness thrills through her frame,
Nor asks, but with a simple gladness feels,
And half-unknowing spreads her beauties forth,
Expanding under Love's soft power, to life
More full and deep than she had known before.

And he—he nourished, deeply, silently
A faithful love, but lock'd within his breast
He kept it, full of hopeful happiness.

Days passed ; and to their home the guests returned.
But on the last night of their stay, when full
And clear the moon was climbing up the sky,
And from the dark, deep blue the happy stars
Smiled lovingly on their fair sister earth,
Randolph and Gertrude, standing 'neath the oak,
Spoke of the power of Time, who beareth down
The petty bubbles of humanity,
Towards an unknown ocean : then he touched

On parting : how, when for some little space
Two hearts have felt and known each other's worth,
And prize, mayhap, each other more than life,
Fate parts them, angry at their short-lived bliss,
And each is left to mourn in loneliness.

And as he spake of this, he look'd at her
With eyes so full of fervent love, her heart
Bounded within her ; but grew still again,
Hush'd by a whisper'd word, "The dream ! the
dream ! "

But ah ! " Betwixt them came a floating shape,
" Camilla's queenly form ; Camilla's face ! "
She pass'd them ; and the moonlight lit a brow
Pale as a dead girl's, with dim eyes which fix'd
A look upon them, standing there alone—
A look like that the fawn, before she dies,
Feeling the keen-tipped arrow at her heart,
Fixes on him who shot it—then she flew,
Ghostlike and silent past the lawn, to hide
Her anguish in the quiet grove beyond.
They saw not, knew not, happy in their love.
And when her love was gone (perhaps for aye),
And when the silence of the old grey halls
Press'd on her mind, and fill'd her eyes with tears,
Her heart with longing sorrow, Gertrude knew
What he had been to her—how large a space
That king-like youth now held in all her thought
And, with the fuller knowledge of herself,

There came a consciousness more blissful still,
Lightening her longing sadness and the gloom
Which hung around her, feeling he was gone :—
The consciousness that she was loved by him.

She kept her happy secret to herself
With all the sweet and timid bashfulness
Of earliest love, the purest of all loves :
But, when alone, from Memory's treasure-house
She took the hoarded treasures of her heart
And spread them forth to cheer its loneliness :
His words ; the soft, long pressure of his hand
Holding her fingers, loth to let them go ;
The glance that half reveal'd and half conceal'd
The secrets of his breast—the eager smile
When she drew near—on these she fed her love,
Full of the sweetest pain, the saddest joy.

Poor heart ! Poor heart ! thy bliss is doom'd to die !
For one fair winter's night, when slow the clock
Of the old village church was chiming twelve,
Gertrude awoke from dreamful slumber sweet,
And found her sister's place beside her left,
And saw Camilla pacing up and down,
Now fast, now slow, now gliding shadow-like,
Now standing in the moonlight, pale with pain,
Her dark eyes raised to heaven in speechless woe.
And Gertrude would have call'd her back, and sought
To court sleep for her, but her quick ear caught
Words murmur'd in a low and tearful voice,

Her sorrow finding vent at last in speech :
"No rest ! No rest ! Alas ! a yearning wild
"Chases sweet sleep away ! a yearning wild
"For one—for one that loves me not ! Alas !
"And I love him, how deeply ! This fond love
"Has changed me quite : I know myself no more !
"Oh ! pale, bright moon, thou shinest on him too ;
"Let thy soft rays caressingly surround
"His brow, than never was a kinglier made,
"And form a glory meet for such a head !
"Oh ! wild fresh wind, that in thy rough career
"Dost sweep o'er land and sea in icy breath,
"Bear him my love, a love he will not heed,
"And then, as he inhales thee, oh ! diffuse
"Thro' heart and head and soul,—thro' all his limbs
"The peaceful rest that he has torn from me !
"Poor heart, to waste thy treasures all on one
"Who cares not for them !—Pour them forth and die !
"Is this the common fate of all mankind,
"To love, and never to be loved again ?
"He loves another.—All my spirit shakes
"With mingled feelings at the thought—he loves
"My Gertrude ! Ay, I know it ! Does she know ?
"I know it by the long, long look he gave,—
"He thought I saw not, but Love quickens all
"The senses—yet, poor eyes, ye gazed so long
"On his proud, kingly face, ye did not see
"If hers replied ! I care not, will not care !

“ But I would give my young bright life away,
“ To have him look on me with those fond eyes !
“ Does she love him ? My fate perchance is his ;
“ He too may love in vain ! Why must this be ?
“ Yet she may love him ! tender little heart !
“ Thou’rt worthy to be his sweet sister ! Ay !
“ But sometimes through my spirit shoots a pang
“ Of keenest jealousy, that she should come
“ Between me and my love, and steal his heart
“ From me ! She cannot love him with a love
“ Like this, which slow but sure consumes my life !
“ She cannot. She is gentle, pure and true,
“ But very childlike, not the wife for him.
“ Am I the wife for him ? Nay God forbid !
“ For well I know that never in this earth,
“ Lived woman that were worthy to be his !
“ No, no ! I know I am not. I am wild
“ With selfish anguish—cannot give him up,
“ Not e’en to make him happy !—Yes, I would,
“ Would live my life away from him and her,
“ Would die forgotten and uncared for, if—
“ Ah ! if he would but look upon my face
“ With that love-glance he fixed on hers that night !
“ Am I not fair as she ? Youth, beauty, grace,
“ Are mine as hers—I love him more than she,
“ But yet—but yet—he loves me not. Oh, God !
“ I am changed, so changed, I know myself no more !
“ Base heart ! Where are the pure high thoughts of love,

- “ True to the death, and sacrificing self
“ To its one idol ? Where the heroism
“ Would bury an affection unreturned
“ And live on calmly, bravely to the end ?
“ Gone ! Gone ! The hot wild-fire which burns my
soul
“ Has sear’d and blasted all ! Alas ! alas !
“ He has gone too ! I may not even see
“ His face ! Oh ! but to hear his voice again !
“ Without him all is night, dark stormy night—
“ I cannot live without him ! Break and die
“ Poor heart, since hope is dead ! Oh ! I am base !
“ What words of jealousy have I thrown forth ?
“ Well, sister, for thee that thou sleepest on !
“ Dreamst thou of him ? Dear heart, forgive, forgive !
“ For I have wrong’d thee in my words this night !
“ Sleep sweet ! He loves thee, and I love thee too :
“ Let our loves rock thee to soft slumber deep !
“ And I will conquer all this passion wild,
“ Will—Ha ! why comest thou thus again loved face,
“ Startling my anguish into ‘life again ?
“ Rest ! Rest ! oh ! me ! Peace ! Peace ! but for
an hour !
“ Alas ! Alas ! I cannot give him up ! ”

With that she flung her on her bed and wept
Hot, passionate tears, and clench’d her little hands
In deepest agony, then still and calm
She lay, not moving and not speaking more.

And Gertrude too lay still, the power of speech
And motion failing her, her gentle face
White, rigid as a maiden's carved in stone ;
She fancied that her very heart was still
And beat no longer, thought and feeling lay
Like some poor hamlet, when the hurricane
Has swept it down and passed, and what were homes
Of glad content and peaceful joy, now lie
A heap of desolate ruins : then a sob
Struggling to burst its tortured prison-house,
Woke her to feel that she was living yet—
Living and suffering ; and her wretched self,
Forgetting, murmured she with trembling voice :
“ Poor sister ! Love ! oh ! thou hast borne so
much ! ”

And as the hot tears rushing to her eyes
Gave vent at last to her still agony,
She pitilessly ask'd her pain-wrung breast,
“ Couldst thou to make her happy give him up ? ”
Nay, nay, it could not be, too much she loved—
And yet Camilla—they had play'd together,
Had lived together all their happy life,
Each knew the secrets of the other's heart,
This love alone had each withheld from each—
Yes ; she must sacrifice love, hope, yea life,
For her one sister's happiness ! And he ?
He would be happier too ! Could she believe
Herself to be fair, wise enough for him ?

Camilla was more worthy of his love !
What if she mourned alone,—alone for aye ?
She was so small, of little note—and they,
Those two, whom best in all the world she loved,
They would be happy ! Yet she knew—she knew
Herself he loved ! What if,—and e'en thought
Brought rushing over neck and brow and cheek,
The coward blood which, in her darkest hour,
Had sought its citadel—Ah ! What if he,
Speaking with words what he had told with looks,
Should ask her to be his, be his for ever ?
Could she say No, and what if she said Ay ?
Camilla's heart might break—and it might be
That, if he knew there was no hope that she
Would wed him, he might learn at last to love
Her sister, and be happier still with her.

So thro' that night, and many an after day.
Did Gertrude struggle with her secret grief
Alone, unaided, utterly alone !

And when spring laugh'd again o'er hill and dell,
When flowers bloom'd and birds sang blithe and sweet
They came again, the old lord and his son ;
The old sweet life began again ; they roam'd
About the country, talking of past days
And days to come : and both the sisters hid
Their anguish 'neath the mask of cheerfulness.
And soon the love-keen eye of Randolph read
The heart of Gertrude, saw the secret love

It nursed : and all his own was thrill'd with joy.
And every morning, when the sun arose
From his blue pillow in the eastern sea,
He cried, "Sweet sun, I'll call her mine ere night!"
And every evening, as he watched the moon,
Sail thro' the spangled ocean of the sky,
He said : "To-morrow will I tell her all."
Yet, happy in his own uncertainty,
He waited, letting day by day glide on,
And watch'd her, dreaming of his coming bliss,
When blushing she should murmur "Yea" and press
Her first shy kiss upon his eager lips.

Till one bright evening, when the sun sank red
Far in the west, and, 'mid the sacred calm
Of woodlands hushed in rest, they stood alone
Listening to flutings of the nightingale,
And watching how the twilight slowly drew
Its shadowy robe upon the quiet land,
He felt the hour was come : a little while,
He toyed with white wild rosebuds he had pluck'd,
Then gave them to her, and with beating heart,
Eager to hear that word so long desired,
He told her all his love. Pure, angel-like,
White-robed, with hair all glinting in the glow
Of the last sunbeam, eyes cast down, and cheeks
Soft, rosy-flushing, stood she for awhile,
Then, like a lily beaten down by storm,
Bent low ; and all the colour died away

From cheek and lip, her eyes grew dark with pain,
A sobbing sigh broke from her tortured breast.
"Answer, love, answer," low and sweet he said,
"Say 'Yes,' dear love, and make me glad for aye!"
Still silence!—for the tempest in her soul
Drove back all words. Oh! to say "Yes" and end
The bitter heart-ache she had borne so long!
Yet ever as her white lips formed the word,
A floating vision crossed her dazzled sight:
A maiden, with dark floating hair, and eyes
Fixed in wild agony on him, and pale
As a dead girl with bloodless, parted lips;
(Camilla as she saw her in her dream!)
And at the awful phantom all her heart
Grew sick within her, asking bitterly,
Why she must make so great a sacrifice?
Then, as her feelings madly strove, there came
A memory o'er her; how, a year ago,
Before she knew this man, she had watch'd the sun
Set in his glory, by Camilla's side,
And, prophet-like, how strange! herself had said,
That Time with rolling years might haply prove,
Which loved the other with the truest love,
The time had come to prove her love, and she
Must fail not. Then with voice low, sweet and clear,
She spoke her doom: "I cannot!"

And he paled

An instant; then, in winning tones began

To plead his cause, with all love's eloquence :
He would not press her ; she should wait awhile,
Not judge too hastily ; she should but wait,
She must relent at length and answer " Yes "—
And more he spoke, words, burning passionate
Till she could bear no more, but clasping both
Her little hands above her fainting heart,
Turned to him eyes black with her agony,
And cried aloud : " Oh ! for heaven's sake, no more !
" My heart will break ! I cannot be your wife !
" No, never ! " Then he said no more, but led
Her, silent, home ; and all the night he strode
About the forest, in the bitterness
Of disappointment. Anger, wounded pride,
And jealousy of some more favour'd one—
Each had its turn and died away : then came
A deep, still heart-ache ; with it, calmer thought :
He called to mind each look, each word which left
Those beauteous lips ; and ever, like a knell,
Rang in his ear : " For Heaven's sake, urge no more !
" My heart will break ! I cannot be your wife !
" No, never ! "—" Knell," he groaned, " of hope and
life ! "

Yet with each heart-throb firmer, clearer grew
The sure conviction that he had not erred :
She loved him—by her glance of love and woe,
By all the anguish of her sobbing voice,—
She loved him ! He would once again implore !

But ever came the words, "My heart will break!"
And bade him spare her, ask her not again.

And she too suffered silent and alone
In anguish ; hiding pain with gentle smiles,
But knowing well her heart must break at last.

And when alone, where none could hear or see,
She took the white wild rosebuds from her breast,
Where they lay always hidden—his last gift—
And kissed them softly, whilst her weary eyes
Bedewed the little faded things with tears.
Whilst he stayed on, half hopeful that his love
Might conquer yet, each day her secret grief
Was born again in seeing him once more :
But when, hope dying, Randolph went away
Heartsick and weary, seeking rest from pain
In ceaseless restlessness ; she laid aside
Her love, the one great joy of her young life,
And thought of him as dead ; the anguish passed ;
And only a sad weariness remained,
A longing for the slumber in the tomb :
The longing of a wounded heart for rest.

And ere the Summer's roses all were faded,
And ere the cuckoo's note had ceased to wake
The dreamy echoes of the forest glades,
Kind Death, approaching as a father nears
A homesick child, bade little Gertrude leave
A world so hateful grown, and thankfully
She felt him coming : all the pain was gone ;

The cords that bound her to the earth were loosed
Tenderly, gently ; and, as in a dream
She felt herself drawn downwards to the tomb.
With ceaseless care they watched beside her bed,
Her father and her sister : all the grief
Her peaceful spirit knew, was grief for them,
Who loved her with such earnest tenderness.

And so the last day came. A little while
Before she died, she turned her restlessly
Upon her pillow, murmuring, "Come to me !
Bid me farewell, for I must go, dear heart !"
And falling into dreams still whisper'd, "Come."
But when the sunset flooded all the sky
With golden glow, she raised her in her bed,
And looking through the casement bade farewell
To all the places she had loved ; then turned
Her eyes on those that wept around her bed,
And said, "Goodbye ! weep not so bitterly !
I go before you : we shall meet again !
Kiss me once more, my father ! Sister dear,
Hold fast my hand, for I would, passing hence,
Clasp thine !
"Ah ! dear ones ! Never did I think to die so happy !"
Then she closed her eyes
Dreaming awhile ; but as the sun's last ray
Shot from behind the mountain's rugged brow,
She woke, rose up in bed and holding still
Camilla's hand, she stretched her other arm

As to'ard one coming, whilst a glorious light
Flashed from her eyes ; she cried : " Thou comest
at last !

" Too late ! I go, dear love ! Farewell, farewell ! "
Then sank back on her sister's breast and pass'd.

And when they clothed her meetly for the tomb,
They found upon her bosom, faded quite,
Some white wild rosebuds ; reverently they laid
The wither'd flow'rets back upon her breast,
And tearful bore her to her resting-place.

And as the group of mourners stood beside
The open grave, and strew'd fair flowers down,
Ere earth was heaped above her, came a man,
And standing by its mouth, look'd down and sigh'd ;
Wept not ; but on his features was the white
Of deadly agony, then drawing close
His cloak about him, gave but one last long glance,
Said deep and low, " Farewell, sweetheart, farewell ! "
And strode away. They filled the yawning grave ;
And made a mound above the blossoms fair,
And at her head they set a little cross
Whereon was writ the one word " Gertrude," there
With loving tears Camilla planted flowers,
Flowers fair and frail as she who slept beneath ;
And every evening sat beside the mound
Watching the sunset, weeping bitterly.

Years passed away ; and changes came to all.
The old lord went to slumber near his child

In the green churchyard, and his lordly halls—
How lordly but how lonely !—his broad lands
And heaped-up golden treasures, all were left
To the last scion of his noble line,
Camilla. There alone she lived, and breathed
A fragrance forth upon the dreary land
And wretched people ; like some lovely flower,
Which fate has planted far from all its kind
In some wild waste, which yet doth live and smile.
Years passed away ; and changes came to all.
Youth grew to manhood, childhood grew to youth,
And many daily left the lists of life,
And many daily entered to the fight,
And changing with old Time who changeth all,
Camilla's heart, chastened by grief and care,
Developed into perfect womanhood.
For ever gone were all the passions wild
Which swept her bosom in her earlier years,
Gone the proud dreams which made her young life
glow
With eagerness ; youth's happy time had fled,
Bearing away her heart's first freshness gay,
Leaving a woman sweet and pure and true,
Queenly and calm, forgetful of herself,
And hiding all her life's lone emptiness
Beneath a smiling face : she murmured not
That all was taken from her—all she loved :
Like the deep calm which follows stormy gales ;

A gentle resignation filled her soul,
And Patience took the place of fierce Despair.
Even her love was changed ; that love to him
Which tho' she never saw him all those years
Yet rather waxed than waned, was softened too ;
Its violence had burnt itself away ;
And now remained th' affection firm and deep,
Yet hopeless, of a woman's faithful heart.
She bravely bore her lot in life and well,
And pitiless ignored the aching heart
Which would call up the joys that might have been ;
And those about her never knew the grief
Which lay beneath her kindly courtesy.
And ever when the daylight died, and stars
Peep'd shyly from the deep blue sky, and mists
Crept o'er the fields, she wander'd forth alone
And sought the graves of Gertrude and her sire,
And sat beside them, giving way to all
The tears that, thro' the busy day she kept
Pent up within her ; memories which now
Were all she had to fill her heart's deep void,
Then soothingly flocked to her mind, and cheered
The dreary woe they could not chase away.

And so one summer evening, she went forth,
As was her wont, to sit beside the mounds ;
But as she near'd them ; standing by the cross
Which marked where Gertrude slept a dreamless sleep
She saw one with his head low bent, and arms

Close folded as in deep, grave thought ; his face
Bore traces of the work of Time and Grief,
The boy-like ardour of his glance was changed
To settled seriousness and self-control,
Youth had been merged in manhood, and he too
Was now no longer what he once had been.
And from Camilla's lips a cry there broke,
Low, startled ; and the rose rush'd to her brow.
He turned : their eyes met ; and they gazed awhile
Each on the other, till, with gentle grace,
Curbing the wild emotions of her heart,
She stretched her hand to him and softly said :
" Welcome ! I never thought to see you more ! "
He took her hand and held it long in his,
Looking at her with earnest glance, and said,
" Here have I passed the happiest hours, and here
" The saddest of my life ; and Memory bade
" Me come and stand by Gertrude's grave again.
" Let us sit down and talk a little while."
Then on a moss-grown tombstone sate they down,
And talked of all those years had brought to each,
Till on the marble cross the first white ray
Of moonlight gleam'd ; then, reverently and low,
As touching an old wound in both their hearts,
He said, " I fain would know how Gertrude died.
" Tell me, I pray you ! " Weeping she told.
With quivering lips and death-pale brow he heard.
Then, when the tale was ended, silent both

They sat, and with a longing tenderness
Thought of the dead, and watched the fading west ;
Till suddenly he took her hand and bent
A look of love on her pale face, and spoke :
“ Camilla, not to see this grave alone,
“ Not to recall a love that now no more
“ Can blossom and bear fruit,—I came not here
“ To think of hours of anguish now gone by !—
“ Let me speak plainly : manhood’s life and cares
“ Have checked the sweet, wild words of youth
 which flow

“ Down like a stream ; as man and woman now
“ We stand together, not as boy and girl.
“ Let me speak plain ! Friend of my early days,
“ Hither I came to woo you for my wife ! ”

He paused, then lower spoke again : “ My friend,
“ I come to offer you not that first love,
“ Which buried lies with her, ’tis past and gone—
“ It comes but once to man, it came to me,
“ And now is gone ; that love I cannot give :
“ But we will love each other with the love
“ Of those whose youth is gone, who see the world
“ Even as it is ; who know how fleeting all
“ Its promises of happiness, who seek
“ Their happiness in other, higher things.
“ You shall my friend and helper be,—my wife,
“ The sharer of each thought that moves my breast
“ And I will be your husband, on whose arm,

" In every care, you trustingly may lean.

" Strengthened by mutual love, we firmly will

" Tread o'er the rough and stony path of life.

" This is the love I offer : be my wife ! "

Woman and maiden blended in the flush
Which mounted to her brow, and the grave glance
Of her dark love-lit eyes ; she gently said,

" But that first love to Gertrude,—could that die ? "

He answered : " Let me tell you ! when I left

" Her grave that day, in grief, I wandered forth

" Striving by restless wanderings to calm down

" The tumult in my heart. And evermore

" I saw my Gertrude's form, her tender eyes

" And golden hair ; and still she lived for me

" As tho' she were not dead. But, by-and-by,

" She changed, and grew less earthly, more of heaven ;

" More shadowy and angel-like ; and thus

" She still reigned in my heart ; only, at times,

" I saw your picture rising in my dreams.

" Not as you used to be, but more as now

" You are ; I loved to think of you as one

" Who had been a gentle friend to me : and still

" You came more often, till there always came

" Two forms to me, one, womanly and kind

" As you are, one, a saint, in heaven, most fair

" And beautiful. And tho' the love to her

" Who sleeps here, lessen'd not, my love for you

" Waxed day by day : and something urged me on

“ To come and see her grave again and you,
“ And woo you for my wife. My dearest one,
“ I know that that sweet saint looks tenderly
“ And glad upon us from her home on high ;
“ For those above rejoice when mortals here
“ Are happy : if she now stood here I think
“ That she would bless us. That love is not dead
“ But changed a little as its object changed ;
“ And a new love has sprung therefrom. You know
“ My tale now, dearest ! Will you be my wife ? ”

And looking at him lovingly, thro' tears
Of deep and sweet emotion, both her hands
She placed in his, nor spoke a word : and he
Pressed them to heart and lips, then drew her near,
And clasped his arms about her tenderly,
And, in the moonlight, by the flower-strewn grave,
They kissed, and seal'd the bond of Man and Wife.





THE MIGHTIEST KING.

A FAIRY TALE.

I.

KNOW you that, just beyond our mortal sight,
There is a world than earth more fair and gay :
'Tis tenanted by many a fairy sprite
Who rules its people with capricious sway.
Full wild and wilful is each tiny fay :
Now gently sportive as a summer breeze,
And innocently harmless in his play ;
Now full of wiles, he troubles pleasant ease,
Mocking at rageful grief, delighting still to tease.

II.

Once in this world there lived a king right royal :
A goodly store of ruddy gold had he ;
Rich was his court, his people brave and loyal ;
And far and wide his realm was fair to see.
Yet, lest a mortal should too happy be,
The Fairy-king had given to him a child

Most wilful—ah ! how beautiful was she !
The elfin dames waxed jealous when she smiled,—
But sore she vexed her sire, she was so proud and
wild.

III.

I know not if on earth this same thing be,
But thro' broad fairyland, I know full well,
The woman rules the man tyrannically
By quicker wit and beauty's wondrous spell :
Thus did the wilful princess, sooth to tell,
Rule o'er her sire, who knew not of her reign,
Yet often would endeavour to rebel,
Only to yield him to her will again,
And fret and chafe to feel his anger all in vain.

IV.

From far and near, from many a distant shore,
To win her hand came princes rich and brave :
They pleaded, sigh'd, deep oaths of love they swore ;
Yet not one kindly smile or word she gave ;
But gaily laugh'd, and mocked her beauty's slave,
That would enslave her, till, in wrath or woe,
They urged their home-bound vessels o'er the
wave,
Their hearts afire with vengeful rage to know
That she would scornful smile to see them baffled
go.

V.

Now, in a blasted forest in this land
A temple stood, with ivy overgrown ;
And evermore, lit by no mortal hand,
There nightly burn'd upon its floor of stone
A ring of ruddy flame ; and who alone
Dared stand within the ring, the dread decrees
Of fate to them, e'en as they wished, were shown ;
They knew the future ; very few were these ;
Most shunn'd the awful fane beneath the blasted trees.

VI.

Thither with timid steps the trembling king
Hied him in secret, in the deepest night ;
Bloodless in face he stood within the ring,
And shuddered sadly at the weird firelight,
And scarcely mote his feet restrain from flight ;
Whilst from his lips a murmuring sound there came
At which he quaked, while swifter and more bright
Danced as he still spoke on the listening flame,
Mocking the painful fear that shook the monarch's
frame.

VII.

"I call on thee at thine appointed hour,
"Great Fairy King, oh, pity thou my care !
"The mightiest of our kings with all his power
"Swears he will waste our land, except his heir
Receive as bride my daughter. Very fair

“ Men say she is ; I know her proudly gay
“ Towards her suitors all ; and she will dare
“ To beard this prince. O Spirit-King, I pray
“ Bid this Disdain at length to Reason’s power give way.

VIII.

“ Say, will she yield and wed him ? ” Thus he spoke ;
Startling that temple drear and desolate.
Then swift thro’ roaring flame and wreathing smoke
A lightning-flash of speech did penetrate,
Thrilling his ear—the piercing voice of Fate :
“ To-morrow when the west shall crimson be,
“ Thy daughter’s lord, O king, shall seek thy gate.
“ The mightiest prince among mankind is he ;
“ The maid shall yield to him her heart right willingly.”

IX.

Ceased straight the voice, and fainter flamed the
ring.

Then, with loud praises, from that temple dread
Forth went the good old monarch : shuddering,
Yet with a self-pleased heart, he homeward sped,
And long’d to see the morrow’s sun loom red.
“ ’Tis well I braved the terrors of that place—
“ Most tremble but to think of them—” he said :
“ The crowning glory this of our great race,
“ The mightiest prince ! ” and smiles beamed on his
round red face.

X.

The fated evening fell ; the west glow'd brightly.
Amid her maidens all, in gladsome mood,
Sat the fair princess ; song and laughter lightly
Ran thro' the alleys of the darkening wood :
No youthful heart the power of Mirth withstood ;
All owned his might : but she, as if some fay
Had breathed a swifter heat thro' all her blood,
Was wilder than the rest in thoughtless play,
And chased with gayer laugh the slow-paced hours
away.

XI.

When sudden, "Lo ! look yonder," cried a maid,
"Now who comes hither ?" For, with thoughtful
pace,
A youth came thro' the forest's silent shade.
"Oh ! tall is he of form and fair of face,"
The Princess cried. "Straight comes he to this
place.
"Now, girls, betray me not—I will cast down
"My irksome state and title for a space ;
"He shall not know me born to wear a crown !
"He has lost his road, methinks, from some far
distant town."

XII.

The maidens watched him all with curious eye :
Upon the moss with tranquil step he strode ;

From 'neath his velvet cap luxuriantly
In shining curls his golden lovelocks flow'd ;
His smooth fair cheek with youth's fresh roses glow'd ;
Bright laughter sparkled in his dark blue e'en ;
His gay-gilt harp the wandering minstrel show'd—
Oh ! such a fair and goodly youth, I ween,
In all broad Fairyland before was never seen.

XIII.

At length he stood amid the merry band ;
Whose half-check'd mirth full daintily did ring :
“ Fair dames, when passing thro' this pleasant land
“ To such gay end of this day's wandering,
“ In troth, I knew not yon wild path would bring
“ My steps.” “ Ho, gentle sir,” the Princess cried,
“ Pray tell us whence and whither travelling
“ You thus pursue your way at eventide,
“ When merriment and rest are reigning far and
wide ? ”

XIV.

“ A wandering bard, I never cease to roam,
“ Myself I know not whither, whence nor why !
“ All men my friends, my country is my home ;
“ Small rest I need, and always merry am I.
“ So shall I lightly journey till I die.
“ But now, fair ladies, since 'tis mine to bask
“ In the soft light of many a glorious eye,

"Whence be these stars, all humbly do I ask.
"It now is mine to hear; and yours the speaker's
task."

XV.

To whom the Princess answer'd full of glee :
"O mirthful bard, your honey-streams of speech
"Flow thro' most simple ears : poor maids are we,
"Whom winds and trees and nodding flowers teach
"That mirth and happiness are given to each.
"Thus we are gay, tho' riches we have none :
"And when the sun his journey's end doth reach
"We roam the woods, our daily labours done :
"With joy we end the day, that was with joy begun.

XVI.

"And now, most merry bard, if bard indeed,
"As law to thee must be a maid's desire !
"Rest you awhile in this fair woodland mead
"And tune to please my ear your blithesome lyre.
"O strike your boasted mirth thro' every wire !
"Sing loud and free, your highest skill employ !
"For since such happy thoughts your heart inspire,
"Which never can depart and never cloy,
"Sing of the highest good, life's chiefest, purest joy !"

XVII.

Straight did he wake his well-loved harp from sleep
With touch caressing, charming forth a strain

Of tender gladness and of rapture deep :
Anon his own rich voice did he unchain,
And sang as if there were not aught like pain,
As if no grief a human soul could move,
But happiness for ever must remain :
He sang the highest bliss that man may prove
The sweet and pure delights, the cloyless joys of love.

XVIII.

Oh sweet, in troth, might be the minstrel's lay,
For on each wind his golden locks that fann'd,
Invisible to mortals, rode a fay,
Obedient to king Love's most high command,
Who urged to swifter skill his burning hand,
And breathed thro' all his soul a new delight,
And gave his words a force, which to withstand
Pass'd mortal power ; till she who scorn'd Love's
might
Bow'd to that secret will, subdued and melted quite.

XIX.

For with disdain the Princess heard awhile ;
Then sudden heaved a little gale of sighs,
Parted her rosy lips to half a smile ;
And from the singer turn'd her speaking eyes ;
And ask'd her throbbing heart in vex'd surprise,
Why she such timid bashfulness should feel :
O'er all her cheek a rose-red blush did rise,

And glowing o'er her frowning forehead steal :
She raised her foam-white hands the roses to
conceal.

XX.

Ceased the soft lay. "O bard, thy song is sweet,
"Follow," the Princess cried ; and with her train
Moved silent homeward from that gay retreat,
Slow moving to the echo of the strain
Which beat wild music thro' her dazzled brain :
"I longed," mused she, "the joys of love to know ;
"Is't thus that I my hidden wish attain ?
"If this is love which others rave of so,
"Would that it might depart; it is most like to woe !"

XXI.

But when from all the rosy eventide
They pass'd into the high-arched palace-hall !
Ah ! what a scene was there of courtly pride !
There stood the land's great lords and magnates all,
Assembled as for some high festival
Around their king, who, purple-robed and crown'd,
Full in the blaze of lamps from roof and wall,
And 'mid the deafening trumpet's loudest sound
Striving well-pleased to seem, shot anxious glances
round.

XXII.

The fair-faced Princess slowly sought her sire :
"Ha ! girl !" he cried, "and art thou here at last !

“ Glows yet, my lords, the sun’s retreating fire ?
“ Alack ! ’tis gone !—the night is falling fast !
“ O Fairy-King, the promised hour is past,
“ And where is he should come to claim my
child ? ”

A scornful look around the Princess cast,
Chief on the king by foolish fears beguiled :
Then sought her eye the bard, and timidly she smiled.

XXIII.

Amazed the minstrel eyed the gaudy scene ;
Swift throbbed the burning heart within his breast ;
Pale grew his cheek which rosy erst had been,
And close his sweetly-sounding lyre he prest.
But his was heart where grief not long may rest :
“ Away with woe ! whilst yet her glance I meet !
“ To seize the present joy is always best !
“ My royal lady-love a smile shall greet ! ”
With joy-lit eyes he stood beside her golden seat.

XXIV.

Then sudden thro’ the wide-spread palace-door,
Amid a shout of voices loud and glad,
Fierce war-steeds thunder’d on the marble floor,
Who bore a troop of knights in armour clad.
Dark was their leader’s face and pale and sad,
All gloomy low’red his brow and full of care,
As he some heart-wound deep and secret had :

Yet leapt the monarch's heart to see him there—
Here was the promised prince should wed his daughter
fair.

XXV.

Light leapt the chieftain from his lofty selle,
And humbly did his haughty head bend low :
" O noble king, the fairies speed thee well,
" And may they ever shower their favours so !
" O hear a weary wretch opprest with woe,
" Whose tears, tho' fast they fall as thunder-rain,
" Quench not the fires which in his bosom glow ;
" Whose stormy sighs his life-blood pitiless drain ;
" Whose heart there wreathes around the giant serpent
Pain.

XXVI.

" Heir am I of the Seven Hundred Isles,
" The broadest of all realms : and Fate's behest
" Show'd me your beauteous daughter's pictured
smiles,
" Which straight did kindle love within my breast.
" 'Tis thine to bid my love be ever blest :
" Grant me, I pray, this Princess fair to wed,
" Who of all dames is purest, loveliest ;
" So shall my sighs no more with blood be fed ;
" And that fierce serpent bow to her his grovelling
head."

XXVII.

So spoke he ; and the King made swift reply :

"Great Prince, 'tis not to save my land from war
"Alone—tho' well I know, impatiently
"Thy vessels wait to bear thy hosts from far—
"But since thy words so mild and loving are,
"Full gladly I my daughter give to thee.
"Thy hopes with foolish pride she will not mar :
"Destined by Fate to be thy bride is she.
"What nobler than thyself may e'er her lover be !"

XXVIII.

Now little care the wilful Princess gave,
Who silent sat upon her golden seat
And trembled as, impetuous wave on wave,
Her blood coursed thro' her, mad with love's pure
heat :

Yet thro' her fingers glances shy and fleet
She sent to where, all rapt in bliss divine
The joyful bard had laid him at her feet,
Who heeded not the courtly pageant fine
But only saw the light of those dark, glorious eyne.

XXIX.

This marked the Prince, and striving with despair
Approached her : "Fairest lady, deign," he cried,
"To listen ! O than beauty's self more fair,
"Be pitiful, these tears' unceasing tide
"Witness my love ! O love me ! be my bride !"
With that such flood of tears his face bedew'd,

So loud he groan'd, so piteously he sigh'd,
That hardest hearts with pity were imbued,
Save hers alone, who smiled scornful and unsubdued.

XXX.

"I like but ill these never-ceasing tears,
"He who would wed me must be merry and bold;
"Warm is the sunlight when no cloud appears;
"With wind and rain the day is bleak and cold.
"Rich mayst thou be—I do not care for gold;
"And powerful—all power I defy:
"Vain, vain the tears that ever burning roll'd
"From thy wan eyes;—laughter and song love I,
"I would not call thee lord, tho' failing I should die!"

XXXI.

Then sternly burst th' astounded monarch's ire;
"A curse upon thy wilful pride!" cried he—
Dark grew his ruddy face, his eye shot fire;
He raged and ground his teeth right furiously—
"Wo worth the day that gave such child to me!
"Girl, wouldst thou be a battle-kindling brand!—
"Here to this noble chieftain give I thee.
"Dare not a father's mandate to withstand,
"Or flee to-night, I swear, a beggar from the
land!"

XXXII.

Whereat the Prince's tears anew did flow;

Up leaped the bard :—but nothing she replied,
Only her cheek with brighter red did glow :
Calmly she rose, and in her wordless pride
The might of kings and princes all defied !
And straight she did unclasp the jewels fair
About her neck and cast them all aside,
And loosed the bands of pearl that bound her
hair ;
Flinging them in the dust, she trampled on them
there,

XXXIII.

And turn'd away. Then cried the bard, "O King,
"Shame that this fairest of all dames should go
"Driven from her home, all lonely wandering !
"Prince, if these be true tears of love which flow,
"How lett'st thou thy beloved be uséd so ?
"Oh ! ill beseems it those whose pow'r is strong
"Such deed against a helpless maid to do !
"I speak to stones. No Sorrow's life is long
"Whom Love and Laughter slay with swift-spéd darts
of song !

XXXIV.

"Therefore, Most Fair, assume that feign'd estate,
"With joyful smiles which late I saw thee bear ;
"Wherein I loved thee ere I knew thee great.
"I follow thee, all danger, grief, and care
"To pluck from thee, or all thy pangs to share !
"The sun will shine tho' not thro' painted glass—

“The stars will twinkle thro’ the still night air—
“The flowers will spring amid the meadow-grass—
“And we shall laugh and sing ; our days will gladly
pass.”

XXXV.

And—marvel mortals at the power of love !—
She who had late defied a monarch’s might,
She whom nor wrath, nor wealth, nor tears could
move,
Bow’d low her queenly head and veiled the light
Of her dark eyes, with love’s own glory bright.
And blushing, trembling, sighing there did stand,
Whilst, laughing with a delicate delight,
The minstrel press’d upon her yielded hand
A passionate kiss, the clasp of Love’s eternal band.

XXXVI.

Throughout the astounded hall reign’d pallid Fear !
Then, resting yet her own within his hand,
The Princess spoke—calm was her voice and clear—
“Bear witness, O ye nobles of our land,
“Ye who could late so tamely passive stand
“And see my sire the bonds most sacred break,
“Because I could not love at his command ;
“This minstrel for my lawful lord I take.
“I love him—he alone fear’d nothing for my
sake.”

XXXVII.

Then wail'd anew the hopeless Prince, and loud
His followers clamour'd furious and bold—
Wild voices shouted from the swaying crowd,
Still higher and more wild the tumult roll'd !
Up sprang the monarch from his throne of gold,
Shrieking, " A curse on thee and thine receive !
" In icy chains Remorse thy soul shall hold !
" Fool—fool, a fairy's promise to believe !
" The mightiest Prince ! Ha ! ha ! Behold how fays
deceive."

XXXVIII.

But sudden hush'd and silent grew the hall,
For leaping from each lamp with dazzling light,
There shone upon the troubled festival,
The wondrous form of many a fiery sprite ;
Who hurled adown their flaming sceptres bright,
Which shot a fearful thrill thro' all the frame
Of those whose hap it was to see this sight :
Swift as the lightning from their hands they came,
And round the minstrel's head did form a crown of
flame.

XXXIX.

O who shall paint the light that flash'd and shone
Within the minstrel's glad and glorious eye :
None dared to meet his glance, save her alone,
Whose hand he still did press full tenderly :
King-like he stood, with aspect calm and high,

Transfigured wholly by the spirit-fire
That laved his lofty forehead gleefully :
And leaping, dancing, shooting ever higher
Seem'd his wrapt mind with thoughts unearthly to
inspire !

XL.

Then fell a voice : " O foolish King and blind,
" Wide are the realms ye mortal princes sway,
" But boundless is the kingdom of the Mind !
" Are ye great kings, because men form or slay,
" At your command—the creatures of a day ?
" What then ' is he who wakes men's smiles or
tears,
" Whom gladly doth the heart of man obey :
" Who holds his state in Fancy's magic spheres :
" And wields his deathless power thro' all Time's
rolling years ?

XLI.

" This power the Heaven-sent Bard alone doth wield !
" And now this Bard thy daughter's mate must be :
" To Fate's unchanging mandate thou must yield !"
Here ceased the awful voice, and suddenly
The fairies faded : only wild and free
The fire-flakes sported round the minstrel's head !
How awed was all that goodly company !
From every cheek had fled the living red ;
Each voice was chain'd with fear ; each heart throb'd
fast with dread,

XLII.

Save theirs alone who ever hand in hand,
In rapture still because unspeakable
Each gazing on the other's face did stand.
What gladness in her glowing smile did dwell,
How tenderly and warm his glances fell !
Her steadfast eyes how loving and how meek !
How strove his fingers by their clasp to tell
What words to half express were all too weak !
How eloquent a tongue her flying blushes speak !

XLIII.

And shall I tell how bard and maid were wed
(The monarch yielding unto Fate's decree),
And how their days in love and gladness sped,
How humbled homeward o'er the roaring sea
The Monarch of the Many Isles did flee,
How when the aged King did pass away
The Minstrel ruled the realm right gloriously—
And how the nation prosper'd 'neath his sway !
These scenes let Fancy paint ! Here ceaseth then
my lay !



“TAKE UP THY CROSS AND FOLLOW ME”

“TAKE up thy cross and follow Me ! ”

Why dost thou fear the wilderness?

Shall I not help and comfort thee

Thro’ ail this life’s rough bitterness ?

For thee I suffered, for thee bled,

Lonely upon the cruel tree,

For thee in anguish bow’d my head ;

And dost thou fear to follow Me !

Lonely and drear thy life may seem,

Dark clouds may loom across the sky ;

But they will vanish as a dream

When I shall summon thee on high.

Courage, then ! Courage, aching heart !

My face in heaven thou soon shalt see !

Play manfully thy destined part—

“Take up thy cross and follow Me.”



THE LAST GOOD-NIGHT.

GOOD-NIGHT ! Good-night ! The ruddy rays
That quiver'd in the western sky,
Closing this happiest of days,
Are faded now ! Tears dim thine eye !
Oh ! let us weep ! It is the last,
Last time that we shall watch the light
Dying in glory all too fast :
This is our last, our last good-night.

It may be when I'm far away,
Friends will forget, and joys will flee ;
But, tho' all others' love decay,
Yet thou, love, wilt be true to me ?
By our first meeting—by the vow
We pledged when our young hearts were light—
By all the pangs that rend us now,
Forget me not ! Good-night ! Good-night !



THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

How fair they are, mine own loved hills, reposing
In the sweet stillness of the summer eve ;
While on the lake, ere soft their bright wings closing,
The sunbeams linger, as if loth to leave
The beauteous scene. Oh ! sad, yet glorious earth,
How much of grief thou hast,—how much of mirth !

Evening !—The tir'd lab'rer from the mountains
Slowly descends to his dear village home ;
The children cease their play by plashing fountains,
Back to the huts in yonder vale to roam.
Peace, peace and joy are shower'd on all around ;
The hills they slumber in a rest profound.

Ah ! now awake my longings deep and lonely
For thy dear face, thy gladsome voice, my son ;
All is so bright ; thou, thou art wanting only—
Wanting, ah ! most of all when day is done.
My child, how often have we watched each star
Rise, faint reflected in the lake afar !

Does the moon brightly shine upon thy dwelling,
So chastely beauteous in her silver light
Of home and all its distant loved ones telling ?
Do thy dreams seek us thro' the silent night ?
Where art thou ? Dost thou long my face to see,
As my heart, deeply mournful, longs for thee ?

Ah ! I remember how we sadly parted !
How thy dark, fiery eye with tears was wet,
As to my breast I clasped thee broken-hearted !
Didst thou not look upon them with regret,
Thy hills ? Ah ! no ! The wild and stormy sea
With its fierce mountain-billows was for thee !

Oh ! it is hard to rear a fair, young being
Only to see him go ; to know that years
May pass, in woe and weary longing fleeing
Ere he return to chase all anxious fears !
This is my fate ! The mountains and the main
Part us ! Who knows if we shall meet again !

God's will be done ! Altho' my heart be aching
Once, but once more my only son to see—
Altho' it yearns, yes, e'en almost to breaking,
But once to hear his voice, I bow to Thee,
To Thee, my God. I trust in Thy true word,
And firm believe that all my prayers are heard.

And it may be home-echoes will awaken
In thy soul longings thine old home again
To see : the gloom will from the hills be taken,
And from my soul the weary load of pain !
Dear Lord, Thou knowest how this heart doth yearn
For him—Oh ! grant that he may yet return !

Gone is the western glory, and all bright,
With radiance meek and soft the moon doth shine.
Oh ! strangely glorious is thy summer night,
Fair Switzerland, thou lovely land of mine !
It seems to-night that thou more lovely art—
A strange calm, holy hope steals thro' my heart.

My son ! The mountain winds so softly playing
O'er the green meadows in their chasten'd glee,
The trees which to their gentle breath are swaying,
The lake's still murmurs—all, all speak of thee,
My own, dear boy, of thee ! And dost thou know
How oft, how oft for thee my sad tears flow ?

Silence is o'er the land ; no sound awakes
The slumb'ring echoes in the quiet glades ;
Only the wind to fitful sighing breaks ;
The flow'rets sleep in still, cool forest-shades.
Silence—yet—oh ! my heart be still—what tread
Shook the dew from the flowers' leafy bed ?

What tread ? Ah ! none ! 'Twas fancy's power
awoke

The sound ! I must be patient and be strong.
Yet sure no fancy then the quiet broke—
A firm step passes the still woods among !
'Tis but the husbandman who, hurrying fast,
Belated to his village home hath pass'd.

I must—I will be still ! Oh ! foolish heart,
To start at every footstep in the dell !
Bid all these agonizing hopes depart—
My God ! my God ! I know that step too well !
I see him—Oh ! my heart, throb not so wild !—
Come to my bosom ! Oh ! my child ! my child !

Come to the heart whose faithful love hath yearn'd
So long to see thee ! This o'erwhelming joy
I cannot grasp ! Art thou indeed returned ?
Do thy lips press my brow, my long-lost boy ?
Are these thine arms about me closely cast ?
And do I hear my son's dear voice at last ?

Thou weepest ! Has thy fainting spirit been
Torn by wild conflicts ? Hath thy bleeding breast
The fickleness of plighted friendship seen ?
Oh ! rest thee, wanderer, on this bosom, rest !
How couldst thou thus upon the ocean roam,
Making so desolate thy mother's home ?

Thou sobb'st. "Forgive me, mother!" Long ago
Have I forgiven. Loved one, weep not now!
But yet for very joy my tears must flow!
Oh! happiness, once more to kiss thy brow!
The gloom, the twilight from the hills is gone:
Thou art restored to me, my son, my son!





SONG OF THE GREEKS AFTER THE
BATTLE OF MARATHON.

THEY are fallen, the haughty Persians—
They strew the battle-field !
The setting gleams of the golden sun
Light gory lance and shield !
And o'er the roaring sea
The tyrant now departs ;
Our own loved land once more is free !
Rejoice, oh! Grecian hearts !

Swell, swell the song of triumph !
Raise, raise the minstrel strain !
A glorious day is this for Greece ;
The Persian ne'er again
Shall with such haughty boast
Sweep o'er our lovely land,
For long will he and all his host
Regret our powerful hand.

And proudly future ages
Shall this our deed proclaim,
The noblest of the deeds that yet
Have graced our country's name !
And, with a coward fear,
Our foe shall seek his home,
To mourn the day that brought him here
Across the white sea-foam !

How glorious is the feeling
That this land with all its bowers,
Its glowing sky, its mountains grand,
Its flashing streams—is ours !
Oh ! rivers brighter, swifter flow—
Spring forth fair flower and tree,
Ye mountains rise, ye heavens glow !
Rejoice, for Greece is free !

Then warriors take your armour,
And cross the surging deep,
And nerve your arm for the battle's shock !
On the flying foeman sweep !
And when the fight grows high,
As a spur to urge you on,
Be the thought of Greece's liberty,
And the thought of Marathon !



THE WIDOW.

THE sabbath bells are ringing
O'er every heath and dell ;
And a solemn peace seems springing forth
From every deep-toned bell !
The village folk are strolling
Down thro' the quiet glade,
Towards the old, gray church that stands
Amid the poplar shade.

Tho' sweet the organ's rolling,
Tho' sweet to praise and pray,
I cannot join the worshippers
In God's dear house to-day ;
For a sorrow deep and tender
Is reigning in my heart :
A year ago to-day, husband,
Thou didst from me depart.

Oh ! faithful life-companion !
Oh ! heart so true and tried,

Thro' all life's cares and dangers,
My comforter and guide !
Oh ! spirit kind and tender,
As dauntless firm and strong—
Without thee life is but a blank ;
I cannot bear it long !

As here I stand and ponder,
Comes o'er my soul again
The fearful thrill of anguish deep
That shook my spirit then,
When, by thy couch, at sunrise,
I knelt in bitter strife,
And yearn'd to light again the flame
Of thy fast-fading life.

Nay, it is passed for ever !
Why should I tear apart
The aching scar that covers now
The deep wound in my heart ?
A future full of rest and peace,
Beyond the grave, I know
Awaits me ! This impatient heart
Longs but too much to go !

Grey hair, that once was golden—
O wan and wrinkled brow—
Dim eyes, whence all the light is gone—
Limbs, frail and feeble now—

Are ye not signs that slowly
The end comes—slow but sure ?
I have but yet a little while
To suffer and endure !

And why should I so sadly
Look up to God's bright heaven ?
A cup of mingled joy and pain
To all on earth is given :
And shall I say that gladness
Ne'er shone upon my woe ?
A thousand voices in my heart
Awake, and answer, No !

For was not that an hour
Of joy too sweet to tell,
When, all alone, we wander'd
In yonder leafy dell,
And, when no ear could hear us,
Beneath the old oak-boughs
We breathed, in tender whispers low,
The holiest of vows ?

Was I not awed yet blissful
When thro' the church so still,
There rang, as side by side we stood,
His firm and calm, "I will" ?

And thro' the many changes
That meet us in life's way,
Has e'er that vow been broken, love—
Thy love e'er known decay ?

Yes, I can wait, my husband !
The thought of those old days
Lights up the present loneliness
With hopeful moon-like rays :
And tho' my sun has set in death,
Too much I must not pine ;
Since all the glories of the night—
Since memory's joys are mine.

But sometimes I am weary ;
I long thy face to see.
Alas, my love, that thou art gone
So far, so far from me !
Yet, from this very weariness,
A glorious hope grows strong—
We are parted, O my husband,
But it will not be for long.





VARIOUS FRAGMENTS.

My heart beats wildly! As the rushing river
Swift passes where the willows o'er it quiver,
And, heeding not the beauty of its source,
Toward its goal still keeps its headlong course,
Nor pauses for awhile, nor knoweth rest,
Save in the deep, blue ocean's panting breast,
So my heart turns from all around it here,
Tho' much be beautiful and much be dear,
And restless, heaving, keeps its course to thee,
O vast, mysterious eternity!

When Summer goes the leaves must fall,
And leave the trees all brown and bare;
Whirl'd downward by the wind they all
Must seek the ground—how sadly fair

The trees their groaning branches sway
In sorrow to the gloomy sky;
They mourn; their crown is torn away
They look as did they wish to die.

Yet, when the winter-time is o'er,
And flowers smile on hill and plain,
The kindly Spring will soon restore
To them their lovely leaves again.

What if, in foolish bitterness,
Yon oak should sullen fall and die?
For him would come no loveliness,
For ever barren he must lie.

This is thy winter-time, poor heart !
Like leaves thy joys are from thee torn.
Have patience : winter will depart ;
Joy will return : thou wilt not mourn

For ever ; only do not sigh
So much for death to ease thy pain.
Wait ! Summer's sun will shine on high,
And wake thy joyousness again !

O coward heart ! 'Tis he alone
Who fears the storm that longs to die !
Eternal grief is given to none :
Then bear thy sorrows manfully !

I AM but one in a vast, panting throng
All pressing towards one goal ;
Yet in this breast are feelings deep and strong ;
For an immortal soul

Is mine ! When yon bright stars shall cease to
shine,
When earth shall nothing be,
An atom tho' I am, this life of mine
Will be eternity !

We are rolling, rolling eastward, happy Earth,
Rolling towards the golden portals of the day ;
Soon thy plains will all be glad with joy and mirth,
And the sunbeams make thy shadowy mountains gay !

We are rolling, rolling eastward, happy Earth !
Before thee lies the night's blue darkness deep,
The grave of day, yet whence it has its birth,
Which soon will hush thee into silent sleep !

FORWARD rode he to the fight ;
Wildly flash'd his eagle eye
In the day's red, dawning light ;
" On," he cried, " to win or die."

Low at evening sank the sun
In the sea's white flashing foam :
They had fought the fight and won ;
But they bore him dying home.

OH ! Love, thou cruel, cruel child,
Why dost torment me so ?
This pain, it almost drives me wild ;
Then, prithee, let me go !

Ah ! me ! thine arrow thro' my heart,
It pierceth very sore !
Draw from the wound this fatal dart,
And bid it bleed no more.

Thou comest to ease me—yet nay, nay !
The bitter pain is sweet,
And if thou draw the dart away
My heart will cease to beat !





A VISION.

On my bed I lay, and thought of days which now are
past and gone ;
Thought how e'en my little life was with the ages
rolling on ;
Thought how fair and gay our life begins—how soon
that life is done.

And I watch'd the fair moon shining clear in yonder
deep blue height,
And the bright stars, gleaming in the sky with soft
and loving light,
Sparkling like fair jewels on the swarthy brows of
silent Night.

So I ponder'd, till I heard a booming like the sullen
roar
Of the ocean, when it rolls its distant waves on some
far shore,
Or a gale of wind, when rushing thro' a forest old
and hoar.

Then, among the planets, clear and plain, I saw bright
forms arise,
Standing on the clouds which floated dimly in the
quiet skies,
Looking down upon me calmly with their soft and
shining eyes.

There were smiling children and old men with locks
of silver grey,
Matrons gentle, noble youths, and maidens beautiful
and gay,—
Glorious spirit-forms that dwelt on earth in ages
past away.

From their lips there gush'd a song, which, echoing
past the far-off spheres,
Laden with the faint remembrance of a thousand
bygone years,
Borne upon the wind, a wordless murmur, reach'd
my listening ears.

As I gazed and wondered fainter and more shadowy
grew the crowd
Till I saw about them folding, like a brightly mourn-
ful shroud,
Bathed in floods of moonlight silver clear, a misty,
wandering cloud :

And I sigh'd in sadness, thinking that the vision all
was o'er ;
For my spirit long'd to pierce to those far heights—
to know still more
Of the dim mysterious beings mortal never saw
before.

Suddenly there flashéd forth a glory all unearthly
bright,
Darkening the moon and shooting, quivering in the
awestruck night,
While my spirit trembled wildly in a passion of
delight.

In the midst there slowly rose a haze of soft and
twilight grey,
Like the pearly gloom which reigns when in the west
has sunk the day :
And, as still I gazed, the mist, asunder riven, roll'd
away.

Then, upon a throne-like cloud all steeped in light,
I saw them stand,
All the great men of the earth, from every clime, from
every land !—
Calm and beautiful they stood, as brothers, clasping
hand in hand.

Those they were whose very names thrill each pure
breast with joy and awe,
Those whose lives, e'en here, were govern'd by some
more than earthly law—
Them, in their celestial glory, with these mortal eyes,
I saw.

Thro' all woes that man must bear, thro' every shade
of human ill,
Struggling onward thro' the darkness, higher, ever
higher still,
Every obstacle o'ercoming by the mighty force of
will,

They have won eternal fame and gain'd at last the
loftiest heights,
And now stand in earth's deep darkness like bright,
shining beacon-lights
Pointing man towards the crown of lasting joy for
which he fights.

They who fiercest, here on earth, against each other
erring strove
Clasped each other's hands the closest in their spiritual
love ;
For they now were raiséd high all earthly weaknesses
above.

Sages watch'd our little earth roll slowly onward at
their feet :

With a noble smile, they bow'd them from their high
and heavenly seat

Every movement, every struggle, every better change
to greet.

Far removed from all the woe that in our human
bosoms stirs,

With their hoary locks all crown'd with glory, such as
Truth confers,

Godlike in their perfect wisdom, stood the old
philosophers.

There was many a statesman who had deeds of
peaceful courage wrought,

Who, himself forgetting, still his country's good alone
had sought—

Hers alone his life of noble labour—hers his dying
thought.

Glorious above all others stood the poet-band: a
lay

Of celestial joy seem'd trembling on their lips—a
flashing ray

From the Sun of Inspiration lit their eyes! Most
fair were they!

Calm, majestic stood they ; and awhile o'er all a
silence hung ;
Till a music wondrous sweet thro' all the midnight
quiet rung :
Lifting up their voices then, in clearest tones, the
poets sung :

“ Hail ! O Earth, in sorrow rolling ! Waken, waken,
mother dear !
Patience for a little while, and journey onward year
by year !
Slow on high the clouds are breaking, and the Golden
Age is near !

“ Hail ! O man ! Hail ! brother, toiling sadly thro'
the night of care,
To'ards a dim and shadowy future, seeming dark to
thee and bare !
Hail ! for an eternity of deepest bliss awaits thee
there !

“ We have done with grief ; no more for us a sorrow
now can be :
Far thro' the mysterious future and the gloomy
past we see,
And we know all that is hidden in black clouds as yet
to thee.

"Hail! thrice Hail! we know the future, but its
secrets may not tell;
Only this: Have courage! There is joy for thee,
and all is well!
Let this thought illumine the prison where thou for
a while must dwell.

Hail! not we alone, but all the unseen spirits,
watch thy way!
Every moment brings thee nearer, nearer to the
golden day
Of that age when Night shall flee before pure
Wisdom's dazzling ray!"

Thus they sang. And all the host bent to'ards the
earth their glances mild,
Spread their hands as if in blessing, and upon her
kindly smiled;
Whilst thro' all the trembling sky there stole a music
weird and wild.

Then it ceased, and ever fainter grew the forms; the
glory died,
Sinking with the music; and again a floating cloud
did glide
'Twixt me and the spirit-band: I saw it gathering
and sigh'd.

For the vision wholly faded ; and the moon sailed in
the height,
And the stars again lit up the sky with soft and
loving light,
Sparkling like bright jewels on the swarthy brows of
queenly Night.

But it lives within me still : I see them—poet, states-
man, sage ;
And the mem'ry of the lay doth every grief and pain
assuage,
Cheering all my fainting soul with promise of the
Golden Age !





THE RIVERS.

I sit alone,
By a wild river,
Rushing for ever,
And make my moan,
To these dark mountains,
To these bright fountains.

And in the west,
Golden and red,
Sinks the sun's head
On the sea's breast,
Lighting the billow,
His heaving pillow.

'Mid scenes all bright
The river flows ;
Where'er it goes,
Lit with the light
Of the bright sun,
Till day is done.

Flowers o'er its tide
 Bend their sweet faces,
 In sunny places ;
And, by its side,
 Sad willow-trees
 Sigh to the breeze :

Hills green and high
 Still round it stand,
 Guarding the land ;
And it flows by
 Towns rich and gay.
 All, all its way

Is wondrous fair ;
 Yet, strangely lone,
 It rushes on ;
It's only care,
 Soon, soon to be
 In the deep sea !

And, as I stand
 Watching its flow,
 I fain would know
Why thro' the land
 Wave after wave
 Rolls to its grave.

River, I call !
Thou, that dost sweep
Gloomy and deep,
Why wouldst thou fall
Into thy grave ?
Why does each wave

Pass heedless by
All, but to be
Lost in the sea ?
And the reply
Comes to my ear,
Hollow and drear :

“ Far, far away
I had my birth ;
Full of wild mirth,
Carelessly gay,
Onward I crept
Where the flowers slept.

“ Then not alone
Was all my course :
From the same source,
With me flowed on
The stream that I love !
Blue sky above,

“ Flowers around
And woodlands green,
Whence, she unseen,
Floods of sweet sound
Thrilled all the dale,
From nightingale !

“ Blissful was I,
Nor thought of the sea !
But stern decree
Made my joy fly !
Harsh words of Fate,
‘Streams, separate !’

“ Thro’ smiling plains
She flows ; I stray
Thro’ a wild way !
One hope remains ;
Of joy bereft
One hope is left !

“ For unto me,
From yon car of gold
The sun-spirit told
That in the sea,
Glorious and bright,
We shall unite !

“So I am burning
With longing pain,
This to attain ;
Ceaselessly yearning,
Onward I press,
In weariness !

“What is to me
Beauty or light ?
Oh ! to unite,
Pure, glad and free,
With the sweet river
I love for ever !”

On, river on !
Haste to thy goal !
From all my soul
Sorrow seems gone !
We, too, are parted,
Sad, broken-hearted !

Oh ! maiden, on
Life's river flows,
Dark with deep woes :
And I am lone,
Longing to rest
In the sea's breast !

Oh ! maiden sweet,
Let us be brave !
Time to his grave
Flows ; we shall meet
In the deep sea,
Eternity !





KISSES.

A KISS, only one, my darling,
A kiss ! But one !
All nature is love and gladness ;
Must I alone
Pine for the joys of life, whilst
They lie so near ?
A kiss ! oh, a kiss ! one only,
My life, my dear !
Oh ! see, at our feet, the ocean
For evermore
Kisses with yearning passion
His love, the shore !
What are the sunbeams glancing
On every side ?
What, but the Sun's warm kisses
To Earth his bride ?
Oh ! see how the brooklets wander
In summer hours,
Glad lingering on their journey
To kiss the flowers !

The clouds in yon heaven azure
That float so slow
Are kissing with soft embraces
As on they go !
And all the rude wind's rough blowing
O'er land and sea,
It is but his way of giving
Rough kisses free !
The flowers and the waving grasses,
The trees above,
Still taught by some secret power
They kiss in love !
Ay, ocean and cloud and blossom—
They know not why—
Are giving and taking kisses
Eternally !
And wilt thou, in cruel coyness,
Leave me to mourn,
Alone in this glad creation,
In grief forlorn ?
Nay, list to my pleading ! Grant me
This highest bliss !
A kiss, only one, my darling,
One sweet, sweet kiss.



NO.

LOVELY lass with the dark bright eye,
Queen of all girls, my queen,
Here in sadness and tears, I lie
Watching the saucy brook go by,
Thro' the meadows broad and green !

Down in the field where three oak-trees grow—
Where they say, in the night there pass
Ghosts of two men murder'd long ago,
Who wearily wander to and fro—
I see her, the bonny lass.

The wind that blows from the rainy west
Bears me the sound of her voice :
She is singing a song. Oh, wild wind, how blest !
Thou bearest the sound that I love the best,
Which *once* could make me rejoice.

Once could make me rejoice ! Ah ! well !
But she shall not know how I rush'd
In passionate grief thro' the gloomy dell,
Rejoicing to hear the gale roar and yell,
While the rain in torrents gush'd.

And ever the rain with its streaming force,
And the wind which so loud did blow—
The trees which it bowed in its headlong course,—
The brook foaming loud from its rocky source,—
They sobbed in fierce anguish, “ No ! ”

No !—We stood where she stands to-day ;
The sun in the west had set ;
And her eyes they shone with so clear a ray
As she watched the glory far, far away,
That linger'd behind him yet.

And the moon with her face so quiet and pale
Looked down from the blue above ;
And, far 'mid the silence and peace of the dale
Was trilling her vespers the nightingale,—
And I told her—I told her my love !

“ I love you ! I love you ! O be my own !
Do you love me ? ” I whisper'd low ;
And the moon was hidden, the songster flown,
And the wind wail'd loud, as, in clear cold tone
All queenly, she answer'd, “ No.”

They say that there where three oak-trees stand,
By that grey and mouldering stone,
Slain by a cowardly villanous hand,
Were found, long ago, by a peasant band,
A good old man and his son.

But a darker deed than the murderous knife
E'er swift and in secret hath done,
A deadlier anguish, a fiercer strife
Than when the murder'd struggle for life
Have those oak-trees look'd upon.

For more than life are the hopes that dwell
At the source whence our life-streams flow—
And with dying pangs that no tongue can tell,
Writhing in anguish my fond hopes fell,
When so coldly she answer'd, "No!"

In storm and in calm, in wind and in rain,
June sunshine or winter snow,
Rending my heart with deep throbs of pain,
Ever and ever, again and again,
I hear it, that cruel "No!"

The sun has set and the stars shine clear,
And the winds sweep the long, dry grass,
As home, thro' the autumn twilight drear,
I see her moving, my love, my dear,
My lost, my beautiful lass!

Home she goes, and alone I lie—

Alone with my ceaseless woe :

I gaze at the stars, and I long to die,

And low in my ear does the night-wind sigh,

And ever it murmurs, “ No.”





TO MY LITTLE BROTHER.

DEAR little eyes,
Tender and blue as the fair summer skies !
Now seriously sweet with some earnest thought,
Which older spirits may fathom not,—
Now radiant and bright with baby glee,—
Now wild with the fun of the boy to be—
Now dim with the tears that will sometimes rise,
 Dear little eyes !
 Sweet little mouth,
Sweeter than loveliest blooms of the South !
Small cherry lips whence, merry and clear,
Flow the sweetest sounds that can strike the ear,
Childhood's laughter and mirthful cries,
Childish questions and gay replies !
Sweeter than loveliest blooms of the South,
 Sweet little mouth !
 Tiny white hands,
Pink-tipp'd as a lily in eve's light that stands !
Nerved by the force of a firm little will
Fearlessly trying their strength and skill,

Plying the pen with their fingers slight,
Pushing and tearing in romping fight,
With caresses enforcing coaxing commands,

 Tiny white hands !

 Swift little feet,

Racing so gaily o'er meadow and street !

Over the daisied greensward glancing,

Skipping and tripping in baby dancing :

Light and true as the feet of a fawn

Speeding over a forest lawn !

Patter, patter, in nursery or street,

 Swift little feet !

 Dear little heart !

Pure fountain whence purest currents start !

Fill'd with feelings which heave and swell,

That eye may not see, nor tongue may tell ;

Light and careless and free from guile,

Glad in the warmth of Joy's sunny smile,—

A joy that with childhood's fresh years must depart—

 Dear little heart !



FANNY AND I.

THE full moon shone in the heavens,
And the sea-wind blew soft and free,
As I walked abroad in the twilight ;
And Fanny, she walked with me.
O'er the wide sea-beach we wander'd,
Where the wavelets softly play,
And we watch'd the white surf flashing,
Flashing and dying away.
Far away, in the misty distance,
Gleam'd the light of the village small ;
Farther yet stood the heathery mountains
Ghostlike and faint and tall ;
And, touch'd by the moon's soft finger
With a silver glory bright,
The cliffs, like a fairy palace,
Rear'd their walls all dazzling and white.
A spark on the ocean's bosom
Rock'd soft on the breathing deep,
Told of fishermen's nightly labours,
'Mid the hush of the waters' sleep

And the nearer lights of the jetty,
Cheerful and ruddy and gold,
Flash'd tiny rays on the ripples
That with dreamy murmur roll'd.
'Mid the peace of the moonlit twilight,
My heart it beat warm and high ;
I gazed with joy on the ocean,
With joy on the star-strewn sky :
And a holier, deeper feeling,
Made my blood course more swift and warm :
For I was alone with Fanny,
And, dear girl ! she leant on my arm.
She spoke but little, and trembled
At the slightest thing I said ;
Yet the few soft words she utter'd
They flush'd all my cheek with red ;
And my own voice shook with emotion
Which I strove to force back in vain,
For my heart was brimful of gladness,
A gladness akin to pain.
We only talk'd of the beauty
Of the sea and the stars above ;
But we each knew the other's secret,
We each knew the other's love.
We pass'd by the little hamlet
On the shores of the tiny bay,
And came to the rocky pathway
That winds up the chalk-cliff grey.

And ever rougher and harder
Grew the stony and steep ascent ;
Yet never did she draw backward,
And onward we silent went.
My heart shook with shuddering terror,
The blood left my blanching face,
If her little feet light and tender
But stirr'd a stone from its place ;
And I trembled with tender feeling
When timidly, half in fear,
For support when she slipp'd in the twilight
She drew to my side more near ;
And I thought of the happy future,
When, yet more loving and sweet,
She should lean on my arm for protection,
And trust me to guide her feet
Over life's rough pathway of troubles,
Where alone she would fear to go ;
I would gladden each joyful moment,
I would lighten each heavy woe.
So thoughtful, but very happy,
O'er the stony way we pass'd,
And gain'd the cliff's proud summit,
And stood on its brow at last.
And there, as we stood together,
I took her dear hand in mine,
And gazed on those lovely features
All bathed in the sweet moonshine ;

And whispered, " Fanny, dear Fanny,
We have passed up a steep ascent,
And still as we press'd yet further,
Dear love, on my arm you leant.
Let that arm then be your defender
Thro' all the world's care and strife ;
It will ever be true to you, dear,
Ay, true to the end of life !
Be mine, Fanny dearest ! Hear me ;
I have loved you so long and so true
Each throb of my heart, each feeling
That moves in my soul is for you !
Be mine ! Have I read it rightly,
That glance so swift and so shy,
Which blushingly met mine, darling ?
Yes, seemed its dear reply.
Oh ! whisper it low, my darling,
Low and sweet in mine ear—
Say, Yes, I am thine for ever,—
Oh, answer, my life, my dear !"
She gave me a smile more speaking
Than aught that the tongue can say,
Then murmur'd with bashful affection,
" Dear love, I am yours for aye !"
On her lips and fingers and forehead,
On her eyelids drooping and coy,
I rain'd down a shower of kisses,
Wild kisses of passionate joy

And she, like some bird half-frighted
That hides in its downy nest,
All rosy with maidenly blushes,
Laid her head on my blissful breast.
Then home we stray'd thro' the twilight,
With lingering steps and slow :
The happy stars smiled on our gladness,
The wind whisper'd love-notes low !
And when at her gate she kissed me,
And said, " For awhile, good-bye,"
When I was alone with Nature,
With the breezes and star-lit sky,
I watched, till her lamp's soft glimmer
Shone out with its feeble light,
And there, before her window,
I paced the whole of the night.
I gazed on the distant ocean,
And smiled at the silver streams
Of moonlight making its waters
As radiant as my dreams ;
And I read it abroad in the heavens,
In the stars of the deep, blue sky,
I heard it whispered so softly
On the wind that came floating by,—
The ocean with swelling music,
The gay lark at dawn of day,—
All sang as I paced 'neath her window,
" Dear love, I am yours for aye !"



ON THE MARRIAGE OF ROSE JANE D——
AND FREDERICK ERNEST A——

SMILE, azure heavens, with joyful light,
And oh ! sweet birds, sing loud and gay ;
Bloom, flow'rs, in all your beauty bright
To greet this happy, happy day !

Queen Rose, from out thy leafy bow'r
This summer morn has seen thee burst
The loveliest, the most perfect flow'r
That ever rain and sunshine nurs'd.

Oh ! Sun, with eager, glowing eye
Thou watchdst that sweet flow'r unfold,
And on its bow'd head tenderly
Didst shower thy amorous rays of gold.

And fairer than the flowers' queen
As light than darkness is more fair ;
Another Rose has burst her screen,
And breathes a new and keener air.

From childhood's well-loved ties she breaks
And all the sweets of maiden life ;
To other thoughts and feelings wakes,
Takes the sweet duties of a wife !

And brighter than in noon-day skies
The sunshine glows o'er land and sea,
Is the clear radiance of his eyes
As, sweetest bride, they rest on thee.

The sun's bright glory all must fade,
And night will gather over him ;
That love-light knows not faintest shade,
No tempest can its beauty dim.

Ernest and Rose ! In life, in death, .
Those names are linked by tenderest ties,
Of purest love and lasting faith,
Which cannot pall, and never dies.

How sweet the peal of wedding-bells
Sounds through the breezy, sunny sky ;
How soft it dies away, then swells
To louder tones, again to die.

Yet thro' the joy we still can hear
A low and solemn undertone
Stealing upon the listening ear
With sounds of warning all its own.

“Life is not always fair,” it sighs,
“The blossom falls ; and joy must wane ;
Darkness comes on, hope droops and dies ;
And man has days of grief and pain.

“Oh ! well for those who can endure,
Whose hearts are nerv’d to meet with woe,
Whose love is true and courage sure,
With you, sweet pair, may it be so.”

Still, still, cold moaning voice ! no night
Can gather o’er their gladsome day ;
No darkness is, where there is light
Love’s rays will chase all gloom away.

“Ay, well for those whose love is true,”
Love untrue is not love at all ;
Too strong its bands have bound these two,
That they can ever loose and fall.

Oh ! wedded pair ! bright sunshine streams
In gladness on your opening way ;
How sweet and fair the future seems,
Lit with the glowing hues of day !

If wishes fond may chase all woes
As clouds before fresh breezes fly,
No care will pale the cheek of Rose,
Or dim the light in Ernest’s eye.

May Fate with kindly hand but show'r
Blessings upon you ; may Time bring
But sunshine, and no tempest low'r
To pass and leave you sorrowing.

It must be so ! The blossoms bright
Of promise spring from noble root ;
No blasts have power their sweets to blight ;
They must, they will, bear joyful fruit.





ON THE
MARRIAGE OF H.R.H. PRINCE LEOPOLD,
DUKE OF ALBANY,

WITH THE
PRINCESS HELENE OF WALDECK.

ENGLAND ! rejoice ! for once more o'er the wave,
A son of thy lov'd Monarch leads a bride,
To dwell a lovely flow'ret by his side,
Guarded by thee, oh ! Island of the Brave.

A flower more, Britannia, for thy crown,
To smile amid the beauties on thy head.
And a sweet fragrance full of grace to shed
About thy laurel-wreath of old renown.

Amid that garland there are blossoms fair—
There smiles serenely sweet the Danish rose ;
There is the blossom nurs'd by Russian snows ;
And one from German soil is blooming there.

Then hail her who from Waldeck's plains doth come ;
Receive her kindly o'er the foaming sea ;
The flower thy Queen's last son hath pluck'd for
thee ;
Welcome her warmly to her future home.

Oh ! may their life be bright and full of joy.
May sweet Love bind them with his golden cord ;
Prosperity her smiles to them afford,
And no sad cankering care their bliss alloy !

Shine bright, oh sun, with light of burning gold ;
Foam high and white ye waves in stormy glee !
And smile all fair, oh Island of the Free !
Hail ! Hail ! fair Helen ! noble Leopold !





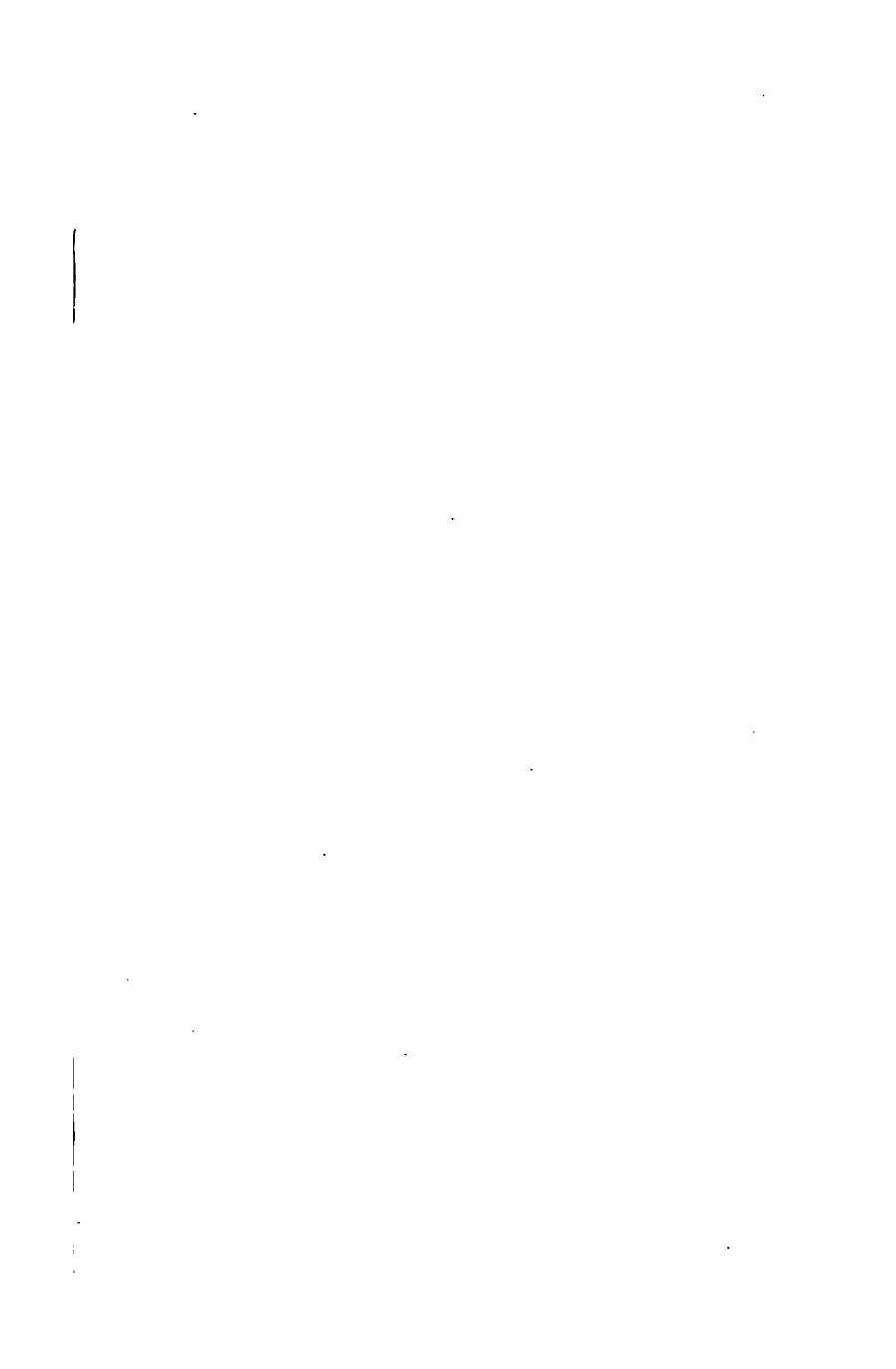
DESPAIR.

LIFE is not worth the living : day by day
Some little joy ebbs slow but sure away :
Hope dies ; Faith wanes ; e'en Love begins to pall :
Despair's deep gloom then grows and darkens all !
Why do we live ? What is the aim of life ?
Are we but here to fall in hopeless strife ?
Or is there, is there, as some sages tell,
Another world where all will yet be well ?
Is each short life but as an arrow sent
From some huge bow by childish fingers bent,
Quivering awhile all weakly in the dark,
And falling e'er it half has reach'd its mark ?
Or is there still a great and glorious goal,
An " everlasting mansion " for the soul,
Where, freed from pain, forgotten grief and care,
She may repose, and live a life most fair ?
If we but knew, but surely knew, 'tis so !—
But ah ! it is not given to man to know !
He may not see, but eagerly he feels
With trembling touch, the veil that all conceals !

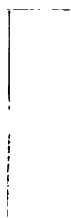
Mirages are those visions bright which seem
To show him future gladness ; in a dream,
A fearful dream, he lives ; in night he dwells,
Whose every breath is echo of farewells :
Vain is his faith, deceitful are his hopes,
And blindly with an unseen foe he copes.
Yet there must come an end ;—what will it be ?
Will Gladness conquer, and all Sorrow flee ?
Or will the victor be relentless Pain,
And, undisturb'd, Despair unceasing reign ?
I know not. Once I cared : I do not now.
Gone is the sunshine from my heart and brow
For ever ! Oh ! the fond hopes darkly crost !
My heart's pure riches of affection lost !
Oh ! friends, once loved, my own glad life above !
Friends ? Faithless all, unworthy of my love !
Oh ! beauteous woman, my one joy in life,—
Alas, alas ! I cannot call thee wife—
Fled from me too ! Upon another's breast,
In false, false love, that queenly head doth rest !
And oh ! my child, my little child, my son !
Ah ! well for thee ! Thy days on earth are done !
Tho' now I mourn of this last hope bereft,
I say, 'Tis well ; for thou, my boy, art left
My one pure mem'ry : sin hath made some blot,
Some stain on all but thee,—it touch'd thee not !
Thou art gone hence, fair, pure and undefiled—
Thou yet are true, my own, my little child !

What is this life ? Its citadel, the heart,
Is faint and weak !—Tear but a vein apart,
Let but the faintest foulness taint the breath—
How soon the citadel must yield to death !
And, with dull apathy, shall I await
Death's dark approach at the command of Fate ?
Were it not better to defy her might
And fling myself into the jaws of Night ?
Ay, better so ! It is in vain to strive
For happiness—unhappy, who would live ?
My body lives : all other life is fled.
Were it not better if that too were dead ?
Ay, better so ! To-day then let it be !
I come, O Death, to give myself to thee !





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